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Question of Palestine

The situation in the Middle East

Consequences of the Iraqi occupation of and aggression against Kuwait

Sustainable development and international economic cooperation

Environment and sustainable development

Measures to eliminate international terrorism

Letter dated 21 January 2002 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Oman to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of the Final Communiqué adopted during the Twenty-second Summit of the Supreme Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council held in Muscat on 30 and 31 December 2001 under the Chairmanship of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said, Sultan of Oman.

I should be grateful if you could have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 41, 42, 54, 97, 98 and 166, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Mohammed A. **Al-Sameen**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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Annex to the letter dated 21 January 2002 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Oman to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Arabic]

Final communiqué adopted by the Supreme Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council at its twenty-second session, held in Muscat, Oman, on 30 and 31 December 2001

At the invitation of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said, Sultan of Oman, the Supreme Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) held its twenty-second session in Muscat, Oman, on 30 and 31 December 2001 under the chairmanship of His Majesty. The meeting was attended by:

His Highness Sheikh Maktoum Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates and Ruler of Dubai;

His Highness Sheikh Hamad Bin Isa Al Khalifa, Amir of Bahrain;

His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah Bin Abdul-Aziz, Crown Prince, Deputy Prime Minister and Commander of the National Guard of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia;

His Highness Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani, Amir of Qatar; and

His Excellency Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, representing His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Amir of Kuwait.

His Excellency Sheikh Jamil Ibrahim Al-Hujeilan, GCC Secretary-General, also participated in the meeting.

The leaders of the GCC countries offered their heartfelt congratulations to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Fahd Bin Abdul-Aziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia, on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of his accession to the throne. They commended the great achievements of his reign in the economic, development and cultural fields and beseeched Almighty God to bestow upon him abundant health so that he might contribute further to the security and stability of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and its people and to the continued progress of the Gulf Cooperation Council.

They expressed happiness at the recovery of His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Amir of Kuwait, beseeching the Lord to grant him continued health and full vigour and to extend to him His assistance in continuing his leadership of Kuwait and his support for the progress of the Council.

The Supreme Council reviewed the auspicious progress made in joint action in the economic, social, political, military, security, cultural and information fields. It expressed satisfaction at the successes achieved, and it affirmed the desire to advance the GCC process so as to realize the ambitions and aspirations of its peoples to achieve the worthy objectives embodied in the GCC Charter and further enhance the security, stability and development of the GCC States and their peoples, thereby promoting the concept of GCC citizenship in all domains.

The cooperation process

Economic issues

The Supreme Council discussed the progress made in economic cooperation among member States and considered the relevant reports and recommendations submitted to it by the Ministerial Council, the ministerial committees and the secretariat.

In order to further enhance such progress and with the desire to advance the economic integration of the GCC States to a stage conducive to the establishment of a common market and a monetary and economic union, the Council adopted the Economic Agreement between the GCC States, replacing the Unified Economic Agreement of November 1981. The new Agreement is in keeping with developments and achievements in GCC economic action and is in line with developments in the international economic arena.

The Council studied the measures taken for the establishment of a GCC customs union, and it decided to advance its launching to 1 January 2003. It further decided to lower the common customs tariff to 5 per cent on all foreign goods imported from outside the customs union except for those exempted in accordance with the decision taken in November 1999 at its twentieth session. The Council decided to grant industrial establishments in the GCC countries an exemption from customs duties on imports of production inputs, subject to specific controls. The Supreme Council instructed the committee on financial and economic cooperation to complete all of the necessary arrangements for the establishment of the customs union in accordance with its new schedule.

The Council adopted the GCC unified customs code, as amended, and approved its implementing regulation and explanatory memorandum. It decided that the Code should take effect on 1 January 2002.

In the context of the establishment of a GCC monetary union and the launching of a single currency, the Supreme Council approved the timetable for the monetary union and instructed the committee of governors of monetary agencies and central banks to implement the decision of the Supreme Council to adopt the United States dollar as a common peg for the currencies of member States before the end of 2002. It also instructed the committee on financial and economic cooperation and the committee of governors to reach agreement before the end of 2005 on the standards of economic performance that would be necessary to ensure the success of the monetary union so that the single currency could be launched by 1 January 2010 at the latest.

In order to integrate the statistical activities of the GCC countries, standardize procedures and save costs, the Supreme Council decided to adopt a uniform periodicity for general censuses with effect from 2010.

The Council adopted the sanitary and phytosanitary code, as amended in the light of the comments of member States and in accordance with the requirements of the relevant international agencies, and decided that it should enter into force with binding effect.

The Council considered the submissions made to it concerning the upgrading of the GCC standards organization in order to meet the requirements of the future

GCC customs union for standardization in member States and achieve ongoing coordination among their existing standards organizations, and it decided to establish a new and independent GCC standards organization.

With a view to promoting economic development in the GCC States, the Supreme Council instructed the development finance institutions of member States to continue to give priority to the provision of concessionary loans for development projects in Bahrain and Oman.

Man and the environment

The Supreme Council was informed of the progress made in the implementation of its previous decisions on employment opportunities for nationals of GCC countries in each of the other member States, and it affirmed that those decisions should be implemented in full.

The Council considered progress made in the implementation of the joint curriculum development plan, instructed ministers of education to expedite its introduction and urged all sectors of the community and the professional associations to ensure its success. The Council was informed of the formation of a food safety committee, and it instructed the agencies concerned to implement the committee's decisions and recommendations.

In the light of the grave environmental situation in the Gulf, the Supreme Council urged member States to complete arrangements for the construction of facilities to receive ballast water and ships' waste in the Gulf region.

Developing further its legislation and regulations to safeguard health and protect the environment and nature, the Supreme Council adopted:

A unified statute on health-care waste management

A unified statute for the management of hazardous chemicals; and

An agreement for the preservation of wildlife and its natural habitat in the GCC States.

Legal issues

The Supreme Council approved as laws with recommendatory effect, for a four-year period, the Abu Dhabi document for a unified juvenile code for the GCC States, the Manama document for a code of legal representation, the Manama document for a unified code of civil procedure and the Muscat document for a unified code of evidence. The Council also agreed to retain the Kuwait document for a unified civil code and the Doha document for a unified penal code, with recommendatory effect, for a further period of four years. All of these instruments seek to enhance cooperation in the field of law and justice among the GCC States.

Military issues

The Supreme Council considered the progress made in military cooperation since its previous session. It expressed satisfaction at the studies that had been completed and at the practical steps taken to strengthen joint defence and military cooperation. In this connection, the Council approved the composition of the joint defence council pursuant to article 9 of the relevant agreement.

Security issues

The Supreme Council approved the decisions adopted at the twentieth meeting of the GCC ministers of the interior, held in Manama on 29 and 30 October 2001, including those promoting the efforts of the GCC countries to streamline formalities relating to the movement of persons and the flow of trade between member States and enhancing cooperation in the drug control field. The Council decided to approve the GCC security strategy to counter the extremism associated with terrorism as well as a money-laundering law.

Advisory Board of the Supreme Council

The Supreme Council considered the observations of its Advisory Board on: education; the development of the educational system; energy and the environment; water strategies; and scientific and technical research. The Council decided to approve them and to refer the joint projects envisaged in those observations to the appropriate ministerial committees for the necessary measures to be taken for their implementation. It instructed the Advisory Board to explore and to submit its observations on giving effect to the long-term comprehensive development strategy and to give priority to the study of social issues, especially those relating to youth welfare, and of information issues.

Political issues

The Supreme Council, recalling and reaffirming its decisions taken at previous sessions, discussed developments in the context of Iraq's compliance with the Security Council resolutions relating to the situation between Iraq and Kuwait and the consequences of Iraq's occupation of Kuwait.

In its concern to create appropriate conditions for the achievement and consolidation of security, peace and stability in the Gulf region, the Council again urged Iraq to discharge all of its obligations under the Security Council resolutions relating to the situation between Iraq and Kuwait, including its obligation to respect the security, independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Kuwait and its obligation to resume its cooperation with the United Nations in order to resolve the outstanding issues relating to cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross, the Tripartite Commission and Ambassador Yuli Vorontsov, the United Nations high-level coordinator for the prisoner issue and the return of property, with a view to devising an expeditious and definitive solution to the problem of Kuwaiti and third-country prisoners and hostages and bringing about the return of all of the Kuwaiti property in its possession.

The Council urged Iraq to take all necessary steps, in implementation of Security Council resolution 949 (1994) and so as to achieve security and stability in the region, to demonstrate its peaceful objectives and intentions and to refrain from any provocative or hostile action against the State of Kuwait.

The Supreme Council urges Iraq and the Secretary-General of the United Nations to resume the dialogue between them concerning renewed cooperation on a basis that will enable the Security Council to lift the economic sanctions imposed on Iraq and end the suffering of the fraternal Iraqi people. It reaffirmed its established position that the independence, unity and territorial integrity of Iraq must be respected and that there must be no interference in its internal affairs.

The Supreme Council discussed the issue of the occupation by Iran of the Greater Tunb, the Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa, three islands belonging to the United Arab Emirates, recalling and reaffirming the decisions it had taken at its twenty-first session.

Having considered the recent contacts between the United Arab Emirates and the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Supreme Council affirmed the full sovereignty of the United Arab Emirates over its three islands, the Greater Tunb, the Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa, and over their territorial waters, their airspace and the related continental shelf and exclusive economic zone, as integral parts of the country.

In accordance with the principle of the collective security of the GCC countries, the Council voiced its support for all the steps being taken by the United Arab Emirates to restore its sovereignty over all three islands by peaceful means. It affirmed its unconditional rejection of all the claims made and measures taken by Iran with respect to the three islands on the grounds that they are null and void, have no legal effect and do not derogate from the established rights of the United Arab Emirates with regard to its three islands.

The Council renewed its call to the Islamic Republic of Iran to agree to refer the dispute to the International Court of Justice.

Following a comprehensive assessment, the Supreme Council instructed the Ministerial Council to continue to examine all peaceful measures that might be conducive to the restoration of the legitimate rights of the United Arab Emirates with respect to its three islands.

The Supreme Council reviewed with great concern the serious deterioration in the situation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip resulting from the persistent use by the Government of Israel of savage methods of repression against the Palestinian people and its continued pursuit of policies involving closures, blockades and incursions into the territory of the Palestinian Authority and the reoccupation of Palestinian cities, with all the grave consequences and implications of such policies. The Council cautioned in this connection against the consequences of remaining silent at this most grievous situation for the security and stability of the entire region, and it charged the Israeli Government with full responsibility for the state in which the peace process finds itself.

The Council affirmed that the present deterioration and the surge of violence under way are fundamentally due to the continuing Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory and the abandonment of the principles and norms governing the peace process as established by the Madrid conference and the agreements concluded by the two parties. The irresponsible decision of the Israeli Government to suspend contacts with the legitimate Palestinian leadership shows that it is not seriously seeking a just and balanced peace and deprives its participation in the peace process of any credibility.

The Supreme Council affirms its full support for the Palestinian Authority and its leader, His Excellency President Yasser Arafat. It calls upon all segments of the Palestinian people to rally to the support of its legitimate elected leadership and consolidate its national unity for the restoration of all of its legitimate rights, including the right to exercise self-determination and establish an independent State on the soil of its homeland with Jerusalem as its capital.

In renewing its commitment to support for the Palestinian people, the Supreme Council affirms its full readiness to play an active role in contributing to building Palestinian institutions and infrastructure. It urges the international community to act for the achievement of security and peace so that such support will have a positive impact on development in the occupied Palestinian territories.

The Council affirmed once more that a just, comprehensive and lasting peace can only be achieved with the restoration to the Palestinian people of all of its legitimate rights and the establishment of an independent Palestinian State on its national soil with Jerusalem as its capital; with Israel's full withdrawal from the occupied Syrian Golan Heights to the boundary line of 4 June 1967; with the completion of Israel's withdrawal from Lebanese territory, including the Shab'a farmlands, to the internationally recognized boundary in accordance with Security Council resolutions 425 (1978) and 426 (1978); and with the release of all the Lebanese prisoners and abductees being held in Israel's prisons.

The Supreme Council condemned the policy of escalating the cycle of violence as pursued by the Israeli Government with the neighbouring countries, a policy that is impelling the region to the brink of the abyss and jeopardizing its security and stability. The Council further stressed the importance of differentiating between legitimate resistance to military occupation and terrorism that is to be condemned in all its forms and regardless of its rationale.

The Supreme Council expressed the hope that the efforts currently under way would halt the acts of violence in the Palestinian territories so that there could be a resumption of negotiations between the two sides leading to a peaceful settlement that would restore the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.

The Supreme Council expressed deep appreciation of the great efforts made by the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Fahd Bin Abdul-Aziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia, and by his brother, His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah Bin Abdul-Aziz Al Saud, Crown Prince, Deputy Prime Minister and Commander of the National Guard of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, to communicate the Arab position on current issues, to stress the need to break the deadlock in the peace process and to affirm the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including its right to establish an independent State on its national soil with Jerusalem as its capital.

The Supreme Council welcomed the address given by President George W. Bush at the United Nations, in which he expressed the view of the United States on the establishment of a viable Palestinian State and an end to the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), as well as the address given by United States Secretary of State Colin L. Powell on the concept of a Palestinian State. The Council is of the view that this extremely important development may lay the foundations for security and peace and for the development of all the States of the region. In order to give substance to these positive visions, the Council calls upon the United States to elaborate a mechanism for their implementation that is consistent with the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.

The Supreme Council again called upon the international community to take action to transform the Middle East region, including the Gulf, into a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons. The Council affirmed once more that Israel must accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear

Weapons and submit all its nuclear facilities to the International Atomic Energy Agency inspection regime.

Appreciating the important role played by the Republic of Yemen in the Arabian peninsula and the responsibilities it assumes in the context of the peninsula's security, stability and development, the Supreme Council welcomes the participation of the fraternal Republic of Yemen in enhancing ties of cooperation and coordination in the context of collective action by the Gulf Cooperation Council through its membership of:

The Council of Ministers of Health of the GCC States;

The Arab Office of Education for the Gulf States;

The Council of Ministers of Labour and Social Affairs of the GCC States; and

The Arabian Gulf Cup soccer tournament.

This step will be followed by others for the participation of the Republic of Yemen in economic and other fields of cooperation. The Supreme Council anticipates that this will contribute to the advancement of development and social welfare and will strengthen cohesion among the peoples and States of the Arabian peninsula.

The Supreme Council welcomes the recent positive developments in Afghanistan, as exemplified by the formation of the Afghan Interim Authority under the chairmanship of Hamid Karzai. It affirms its readiness to cooperate with the new authorities in furthering the Afghan people's aspirations for stability and economic development.

The Supreme Council voiced its condemnation of the terrorist attack on India's Parliament House on 13 December 2001, and it is of the view that the war against terrorism must take place within the framework of international legitimacy as established by the United Nations Security Council.

The Council noted with great concern the tension obtaining between the Republic of India and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. It expresses the hope that the two countries will endeavour to exercise the utmost self-restraint and will return to the positive atmosphere that accompanied the contacts between the leaders of the two countries and make use of it to address the causes of the existing tension between them. The Council expresses its concern, and it calls upon the Security Council to intervene on an urgent basis to meet its responsibilities with respect to the maintenance of the peace and security of this important region of the world and to prevent the continued deterioration of a situation that may have dire consequences.

Extremism, violence and terrorism

The Supreme Council noted with deep concern the mounting extremism, violence and terrorism that have become worldwide preoccupations. The Council condemned the terrorist acts committed against the United States of America on 11 September 2001 and reaffirmed its unconditional rejection and vigorous condemnation of such practices in all their forms and regardless of their motives, seeking as they do to spread anarchy and terror and to take the lives of innocent civilians.

In this context, the Supreme Council affirmed its support for the international coalition to eliminate terrorism under the leadership of the United States of America. It reaffirms that it is fully prepared to cooperate with the international community to address this devastating manifestation, and it calls for concerted international efforts to convene a world summit conference to formulate international principles and norms to combat terrorism and its causes.

The Supreme Council calls upon leaders of opinion, intellectuals and scholars in the Islamic world to endeavour to communicate the values and principles of Islam based as they are on a spirit of tolerance, the rejection of violence and the prohibition of suicide, which are hallmarks of the doctrines of the Islamic religion. It urges peoples of other religions to be positive and reasonable and not to hold Islam responsible for actions and practices that are very far removed from the spirit of Islam and its exalted beliefs.

The Supreme Council expressed its highest appreciation of the great and devoted efforts made by His Highness Sheikh Hamad Bin Isa Al Khalifa, Amir of Bahrain, during the term as chairman of the twenty-first session of the Supreme Council, in conducting consultations for the implementation of Council decisions through which important advances were made in all fields of joint action and the GCC made further progress towards prosperity and the enhanced security and stability of its member States and their peoples.

The Supreme Council lauded the positive role being played by His Highness Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani, Amir of Qatar, chairman of the ninth session of the Islamic Summit Conference, in supporting joint Islamic action and promoting the causes of the Islamic Community.

The Supreme Council also conveyed its deep appreciation and gratitude to His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said, Sultan of Oman, and to his Government and people for the generous hospitality and genuine fraternal sentiments with which the leaders of the GCC countries and members of participating delegations had been received. The leaders of the GCC countries commended the attention and interest accorded to the gathering by His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said, Sultan of Oman, Chairman of the current session of the Supreme Council. They commended his judicious conduct of the proceedings, which had had a major impact on the important results achieved and the decisions taken, and they expressed confidence that Oman, under the leadership of His Majesty, would, as it presides over the work of the session, contribute to strengthening this auspicious process in such a way as to realize the aspirations and ambitions of the peoples of the GCC countries.

The Supreme Council expressed its deep appreciation of the great and devoted endeavours of His Excellency Sheikh Jamil Ibrahim Al-Hujeilan, GCC Secretary-General, and of the effective contributions he has made to this worthy process and to the achievement of important advances with the great effort, copious time and long experience he has invested during his term of office at the head of the GCC secretariat.

The Supreme Council decided to appoint His Excellency Minister of State Abdul Rahman bin Hamad al-Attiyah, of Qatar, as Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council to succeed His Excellency Sheikh Jamil Ibrahim Al-Hujeilan when he completes his term of office at the end of March 2002. The Supreme Council wishes the new Secretary-General every success in his work.

The Supreme Council looks forward to meeting at its twenty-third session, scheduled to be held, God willing, in Qatar in December 2002 at the kind invitation of His Highness Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani, Amir of Qatar.